

Norwich Labor Negotiations Team Minutes
Special Meeting, 1/27/23

Meeting started at 6:08 pm.

Active Participants: Selectboard members Roger Arnold, Mary Layton: Town Counsel: John Klesch, Member of the Public: Stuart Richards

Public Comment: Stuart Richards asked that the agenda and minutes of the Norwich Labor Negotiations Team minutes include the heading "Public Comments."

1. **Review of email regarding the Open Meeting Law.** The team consulted with Town Counsel who quoted 1 V.S.A section 312(h): "At an open meeting the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to express its opinion on matters considered by the public body during the meeting, as long as order is maintained..." It is the opinion of Counsel that "there is nothing in statute requiring 'public comment' be a separate agenda item and, in fact a board may allow public comment as it proceeds through the agenda as to agenda items as they come up." The email from Stuart Richards alleging an Open Meeting Law violation was not specific as to the violation and no specific cure was requested. **Arnold moved, second by Layton to find that the January 24, 2023 email submitted by Stuart Richards does not constitute a notice of an Open Meeting Law violation because it does not meet the requirements of the statute, and if a response is required, to find that no violation occurred. Vote: Yes-Unanimous.**
2. **NEPBA Labor Negotiation contract discussions in executive session:**
 - a. **Arnold moved, second by Layton, Executive session:**
 - b. **Arnold moved (2nd Layton) to find that premature public knowledge would place the Town of Norwich and the Selectboard at a substantial disadvantage regarding the terms and conditions of our employment contract with the NEPBA because it would reveal bargaining strategy and bargaining positions.**
 - c. **Vote: Yes-Unanimous.**
 - d. **Arnold (2nd Layton) moved to enter executive session pursuant to 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(B) for the purposes of consideration of the NEPBA contract and to invite town counsel into the meeting**
 - e. **Vote: Yes-Unanimous. Time executive session entered: 6:17 pm.**
3. **Layton moved, second by Arnold, to enter public session. Vote: Yes-Unanimous. Time public session entered: 7:57 pm.**
4. **Layton moved, second by Arnold to adjourn. Vote: Yes-Unanimous. Time adjourned: 7:59 pm.**